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## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A video slot gaming machine for play by a player, comprising:
  - a housing having a display device for displaying a plurality of game
  - 5 elements in a grid having a plurality of cells, wherein the cells represent a plurality of horizontal reels;
  - a memory device for storing a pay-table; and,
  - a game controller coupled to the display device and the memory device for randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device and for
  - 10 determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined vertical pay-lines, and a wager made by the player.
2. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the game controller is adapted to animate the display device to represent the spinning of horizontal reels.
- 15 3. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the game controller is adapted to randomly select a game element for each cell.
4. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the memory device
- 20 is adapted to store a plurality of arrays of game elements, each array corresponding to a horizontal reel.

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5. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 4, wherein the game controller is adapted to select a stopping position for each array on the corresponding horizontal reel.

5 6. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the set of possible game elements includes gems and symbols representing the legs, torso and arms, and head of first, second, and third characters.

7. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 6, wherein the first, second,  
10 and third characters have different shapes.

8. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 6, wherein the first, second, and third characters have different colors.

15 9. A video slot gaming machine, comprising:  
a housing having a display device for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells;  
a memory device for storing a pay-table; and,  
a game controller coupled to the display device and the memory device  
20 for randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device from a set of possible game elements and determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, and predetermined pay-lines, wherein the set of possible game

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elements includes a plurality of character game elements which comprise an aggregate symbol, and wherein the game controller is adapted to activate a bonus game in response to the plurality of character game elements being located along one of the paylines.

5           10.    A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 9, wherein the bonus game is a sport.

          11.    A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 10, wherein the bonus game is a gymnastics game.

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          12.    A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 10, wherein the bonus game is a diving game.

          13.    A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 10, wherein the bonus game  
15 is a basketball game.

          14.    A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 9, wherein the plurality of cells represent horizontal reels.

20           15.    A video slot machine comprising:  
  
                  a housing having a display device for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells;

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a memory device for storing a pay-table; and,  
a game controller coupled to the display device and the memory device  
for randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device from a set  
of possible game elements and determining an outcome based on the displayed game  
5 elements, a pay-table, and predetermined pay-lines, wherein the game controller is  
adapted to activate a bonus game in response to detecting a triggering event and to  
determine an outcome of the bonus game, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is  
determined as a function of the triggering event and first and second random factors.

10 16. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 15, wherein the triggering  
event is a plurality of character game elements which comprise an aggregate symbol  
being located along one of the paylines.

15 17. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 16, wherein the first random  
factor is an applause meter having a range from 1 to 10.

18. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the game  
controller is adapted to animate a viewer in response to the first random factor.

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19. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 15, wherein the second random factor is a random number representing a plurality of judge scores.

20. A video slot machine, as set forth in claim 15, wherein the plurality of cells represent horizontal reels.

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21. A method for playing a video slot game by a player, comprising:  
displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells, wherein the cells represent horizontal reels;

storing a pay-table;  
10 randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device;

determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined vertical pay-lines, and a wager made by the player.

15 22. A method, as set forth in claim 21, including the step of animating the display device to represent the sliding of horizontal reels.

23. A method, as set forth in claim 21, including the step of randomly selecting a game element for each cell.

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24. A method, as set forth in claim 21, including the step of storing a plurality of arrays of game elements, each array corresponding to a horizontal reel.

25. A method, as set forth in claim 24, including the step of selecting a  
5 stopping position for each array on the corresponding horizontal reel.

26. A method for playing a video slot game by a player, comprising:  
displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of  
cells;  
10 storing a pay-table;  
randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display  
device from a set of possible game elements; and,  
determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-  
table, predetermined pay-lines, and a wager made by the player, wherein the set of  
15 possible game elements includes a plurality of character game elements which comprise  
an aggregate symbol; and,  
activating a bonus game in response to the plurality of character game  
elements being located along one of the paylines.

20 27. A method, as set forth in claim 26, wherein the bonus game is a sport.

28. A method, as set forth in claim 27, wherein the bonus game is a

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gymnastics game.

29. A method, as set forth in claim 27, wherein the bonus game is a diving game.

5 30. A method, as set forth in claim 27, wherein the bonus game is a basketball game.

31. A method, as set forth in claim 26, wherein the plurality of cells represent horizontal reels.

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32. A method for playing a video slot game by a player, comprising:  
displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells;

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storing a pay-table; and,  
randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device from a set of possible game elements and determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined pay-lines, and a wager made by the player;

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detecting a triggering event; and,  
determining an outcome of the bonus game, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the triggering event and first and second random factors.

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33. A method, as set forth in claim 32, wherein the triggering event is a plurality of character game elements which comprise an aggregate symbol being located along one of the paylines.

5 34. A method, as set forth in claim 32, wherein the first random factor is an applause meter having a range from 1 to 10.

35. A method, as set forth in claim 34, including the step of animating a viewer in response to the first random factor.

10 36. A method, as set forth in claim 33, wherein the second random factor is a random number representing a plurality of judge scores.

37. A method, as set forth in claim 32, wherein the plurality of cells represent horizontal reels.

15 38. A computer program product for playing a video game, the computer program product comprising a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied in the medium, the computer readable program code means comprising:

20 computer readable program code means for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells, wherein the cells represent horizontal reels;

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computer readable program code means for storing a pay-table;

computer readable program code means for randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device; and,

computer readable program code means for determining an outcome  
5 based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined vertical pay-lines, and a wager made by the player.

39. A computer program product for playing a video game, the computer program product comprising a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied in the medium, the computer readable program  
10 code means comprising:

computer readable program code means for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells;

computer readable program code means for storing a pay-table;

computer readable program code means for randomly selecting the game  
15 elements to be displayed in the display device from a set of possible game elements; and,

computer readable program code means for determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined pay-lines, and a wager made by the player, wherein the set of possible game elements includes a plurality of character game elements which comprise an aggregate symbol; and,

20 computer readable program code means for activating a bonus game in response to the plurality of character game elements being located along one of the paylines.

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40. A computer program product for playing a video game, the computer program product comprising a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied in the medium, the computer readable program code means comprising:

computer readable program code means for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells;

computer readable program code means for storing a pay-table;

computer readable program code means for randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device from a set of possible game elements and determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined pay-lines, and a wager made by the player;

computer readable program code means for detecting a triggering event;  
and,

computer readable program code means for determining an outcome of the bonus game, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the triggering event and first and second random factors.